

# GUARDIANS OF BEING

SPIRITUAL TEACHINGS FROM OUR DOGS AND CATS



WORDS BY **ECKHART TOLLE** ART BY **PATRICK McDONNELL**

"A book to make you wriggle with joy." — *O, The Oprah Magazine*





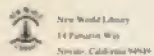
# GUARDIANS OF BEING

WORDS BY ECKHART TOLLE   ART BY PATRICK McDONNELL



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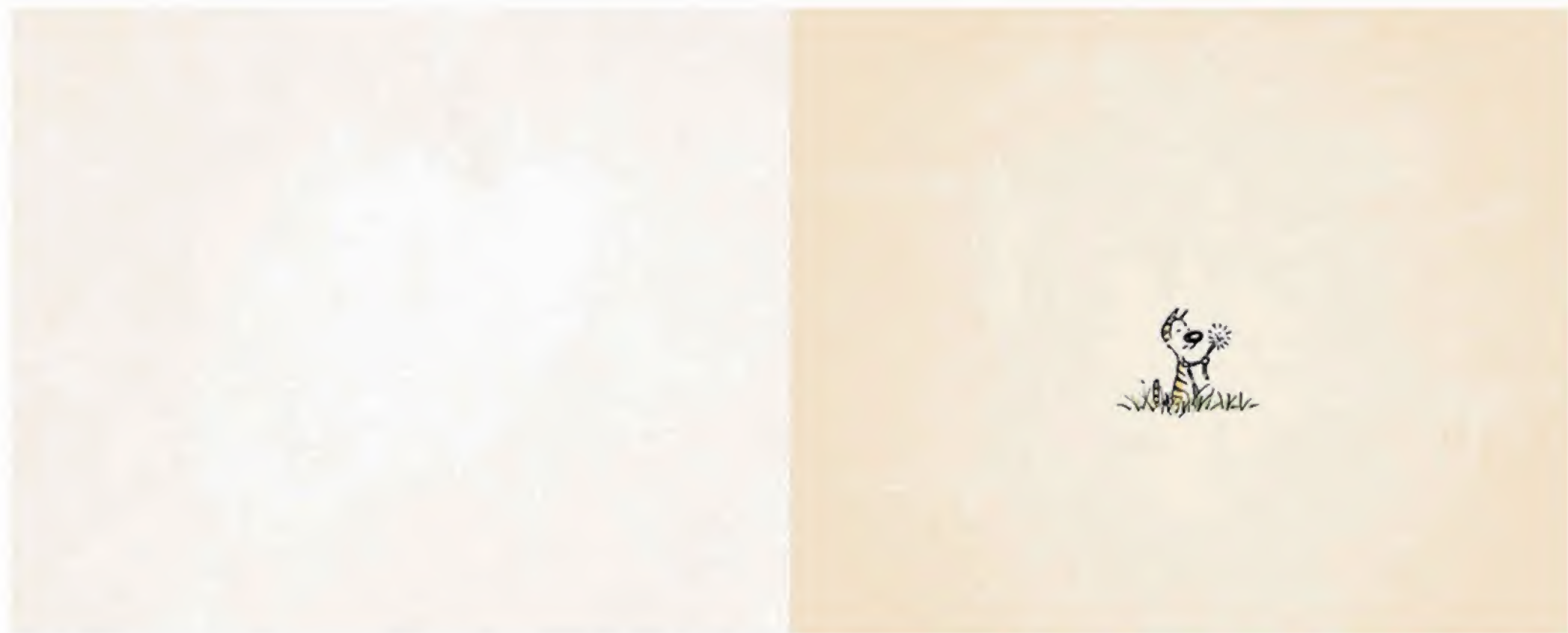
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True **happiness** is found in simple,  
seemingly unremarkable things.



But to be aware of little, quiet things,  
you need to be quiet inside.

A high degree of alertness is required.

Be still. Look. Listen.

Be present.





Bring **awareness** to the many subtle sounds of nature —

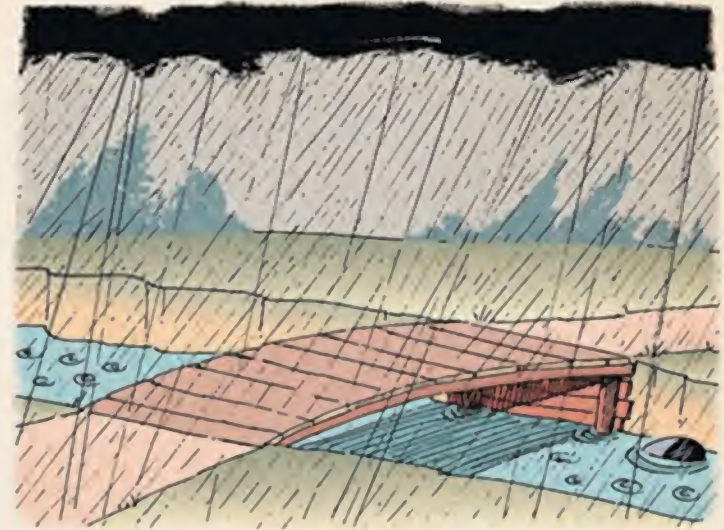


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the rustling of leaves in the wind,



raindrops falling,



the humming of an insect,





the first birdsong at dawn.



Give yourself completely  
to the act of listening.

Beyond the sounds

there is something greater:

a sacredness that cannot be  
understood through thought.



Look at a tree, a flower, a plant.

Let your awareness rest upon it.

How still it is, how deeply rooted in Being.

Allow nature to teach you stillness.



Everything natural — every flower, tree,  
and animal — has important  
lessons to teach us if we would only  
**stop, look, and listen.**





Just watching an animal closely can take you out of  
your mind and bring you into the present moment,  
which is where the animal lives all the time —  
**surrendered to life.**



It's so wonderful to watch an animal,  
because an animal has no opinion about itself.

It is.



That's why the dog is so joyful



and why the cat purrs.





When you pet a dog or listen to a cat purring,  
thinking may subside for a moment and  
**a space of stillness**  
arises within you, a doorway into Being.





The vital function that pets fulfill in this world hasn't been fully recognized.

They keep millions of people sane.



They have become **Guardians of Being.**

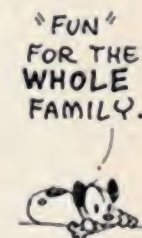
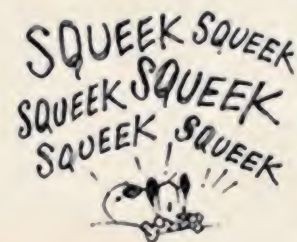




Most of us live in a world of  
mental abstraction, conceptualization,  
and image making — a world of thought.  
We are immersed in a continuous stream  
of mental noise. It seems that we can't  
**stop thinking.**



Just as the dog  
loves to chew bones,  
the human mind  
loves its problems.



We get lost in doing, thinking, remembering, anticipating —  
lost in a maze of complexity and a world of problems.

*Nature can show us the way home.*

the way out of the prison of our own minds.

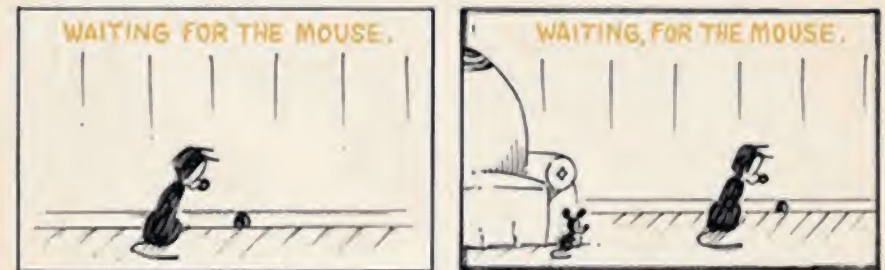


Close your eyes and say to yourself:

*"I wonder what my next thought is going to be."*

Then become as alert as a cat watching a mouse hole.

You may find that, as long as you are absolutely alert,  
the next thought does not arise. . . .







I have lived  
with many  
Zen masters,  
all of them cats.



Millions of people who otherwise would be completely lost in their minds and in endless past and future concerns are taken back by their dog or cat into the present moment, again and again, and reminded of the joy of Being.



We have forgotten what rocks, plants, and  
animals still know. We have forgotten how to be —  
to be still, to be ourselves, to be where life is:

**Here and Now.**





The dog is **in the Now**  
so it can teach you or remind you.



Be alert as you watch a dog at play or at rest.

Let the animal teach you to feel at home in the Now, to

celebrate life by being  
completely present.



The dog is still in the natural state. And you can easily see that, because **you have problems and your dog doesn't**. And while your happy moments may be rare, your dog celebrates life continuously.



You just watch the tail . . .

with some dogs you just look at them —

just a little look is enough — and their tail goes . . .

**“Life is good! Life is good!”**

And they are not telling themselves a story of why life is good.

It's a direct realization.





The human says, "I love myself," or, "I hate myself."  
The dog says, "Woof, woof," which, translated, means

**I am myself.**

I call that integrity — being one with yourself.





The dog has no self-image, good or bad,  
so he has no need to play roles,  
nor does he love himself or hate himself.

He has no self!

How to live free of the burden of self —  
what a great spiritual teaching.

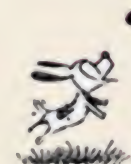
EAT.



WALK.



PLAY.



NAP.



I'M  
A  
SIMPLE  
DOG.



"The key to transformation is to  
**make friends with this moment.**

What form it takes doesn't matter.  
Say yes to it. Allow it. Be with it."

Oh, that was the dog's teaching.  
I'm just translating it into words.









Allow your dog to

take you for a walk every day.

It's good for the body and

it's good for the soul.





Dogs emanate a goodness that people respond to.  
One of the joys of walking your dog is that often people  
come up to you and immediately **their hearts open**.  
They are not interested in you, of course.  
They want to pat your dog.



Dogs offer the **precious opportunity**,  
even to people who are trapped in their egos,  
of loving and being loved unconditionally.



They have been with humans for thousands of years, and now  
there is a link between dogs and humans,  
much closer than it has ever been.



So part of *their divine purpose is to help us.*

But it always goes both ways. Because by living with humans,  
dogs also grow in consciousness; it is reciprocal.





Because dogs and cats still live in the original  
state of connectedness with Being, they can  
help us regain it. When we do so, however,  
**that original state deepens  
and turns into awareness.**





We don't fall below thinking,  
we rise above it.



Nature will teach you to be still,  
if you don't impose on it a stream of thoughts.

A very deep meeting takes place when  
you perceive nature in that way, without naming things.

SITTING QUIETLY, DOING NOTHING,



SPRING COMES,



AND THE GRASS GROWS BY ITSELF.

—Zen Poems





When you don't cover up the world with words and labels,  
a sense of the miraculous returns to your life that was lost  
a long time ago when humanity, instead of using thought,  
became possessed by thought.

A depth returns to your life.

Things regain their newness,  
their freshness.



What is it that so many people  
find enchanting in animals?  
Their essence — **their Being** — is not  
covered up by the mind, as it is in most humans.

And whenever you feel that essence in another,  
you also feel it in yourself.



Every being is a spark of the Divine

or God. Look into the eyes of the dog  
and sense that innermost core.

1916



When you are present,  
you can sense the spirit,  
*the one consciousness,*  
in every creature and  
love it as yourself.





Love is a deep empathy  
with the other's "Beingness."

You recognize yourself,  
your essence, in the other.

And so you can no longer inflict  
suffering on the other.



You are not separate from the whole.  
You are one with the sun, the earth, the air.  
You don't have a life.

You are life.



The one life, the one consciousness,  
takes on the form of a man or woman,  
a blade of grass, a dog,  
a planet, a sun, a galaxy. . . .

This is the play of forms,

the dance of life.



We are ultimately not separate, not from one another nor from any living thing — the flower, the tree, the cat, the dog.

**You can sense yourself in them,**  
the essence of who you are. You could say God.

There is a term, a Christian term which is beautiful . . .









loving the Creator in the creature.

## ECKHART TOLLE

Spiritual teacher and author Eckhart Tolle was born in Germany and educated at the Universities of London and Cambridge. When he was twenty-nine, a profound inner transformation radically changed the course of his life. He devoted the next few years to understanding, integrating, and deepening that transformation, which marked the beginning of an intense inward journey. Later, he began to work in London with individuals and small groups as a counselor and spiritual teacher. Since 1995 he has lived in Vancouver, Canada.

Eckhart is the author of the #1 New York Times bestseller *The Power of Now* (translated into thirty-three languages) and the highly acclaimed follow-up, *A New Earth*, which are widely regarded as two of the most influential spiritual books of our time. Eckhart's other works include *Stillness Speaks*, a book designed for meditative reading, and *Practicing the Power of Now*, which consists of selections from *The Power of Now*.

Eckhart's profound yet simple teachings have already helped countless people throughout the world find inner peace and greater fulfillment in their lives. At the core of the teachings lies the transformation of consciousness, a spiritual awakening that he sees as the next step in human evolution. An essential aspect of this awakening consists in transcending our ego-based state of consciousness. This is a prerequisite not only for personal happiness but also for ending the violent conflict endemic on our planet.

Eckhart is a sought-after public speaker who teaches and travels extensively throughout the world. Many of his talks, interviews, and retreats are published on CD and DVD. Most of the teachings are given in English, but occasionally Eckhart also gives talks in German and Spanish.

[WWW.ECKHARTTOLLE.COM](http://WWW.ECKHARTTOLLE.COM)

## PATRICK McDONNELL

Patrick McDonnell's *MUTTS* is a combination of his love of animals and his love of the art of the comic strip. Created in 1994, *MUTTS* now appears in over 700 newspapers around the world and on the web at [muttscomics.com](http://muttscomics.com). Peanuts creator Charles M. Schulz called *MUTTS* "one of the best comic strips of all time." Patrick has received numerous awards for his art and animal advocacy. He has over 20 books in print including the New York Times bestsellers *The Gift of Nothing* and *Hug Time*.

Patrick is a member of the national boards of directors for both the Humane Society of the United States and the Fund for Animals. He lives in New Jersey with his wife, Karen; the formerly feral feline MeeMow; the still feral Not Ootie; and a new best friend, Amelie.

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